

Gulf veterans suffering with the Persian Gulf War Illness. Authority for the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide health care for diseases possibly linked to radiation has been made permanent.

The Department of Veterans Affairs is authorized by Congress to provide special priority for enrollment for health services to any veteran exposed to ionizing radiation while participating in the nuclear weapons testing program, or if he or she served with the U.S. occupation forces in Hiroshima or Nagasaki. These veterans are eligible to participate in the VA ionizing radiation registry examination program, under which the VA will perform a complete physical examination, including all necessary tests, for each veteran who requests it. The VA also pays compensation to veterans and their survivors if the veteran is determined to have a disability due to radiation exposure while in service.

Unfortunately, Mr. President, with some disorders, evidence of a service-connection is simply not conclusive. That is why Congress has in some cases permitted a "presumption" of a service-connection, so that veterans can be provided much-needed care, and given appropriate compensation, while science endeavors to verify whether a correlation can be established between military service and the subsequent development of a given medical disorder.

Authority for the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide medical treatment for diseases possibly linked to radiation has been made permanent by Congress. In 1987, Congress found that due to the fact that the evidence of exposure-level risk could not be conclusively verified, our national veterans benefits policy should depend on correlation of various diseases with radiation exposure. Public Law 100-321 included language establishing a presumption that 13 diseases would be presumed to be service-connected if they developed in veterans whose service histories included active duty in a "radiation-risk activity." Since 1987, the list established under Public Law 100-321 has been expanded to include additional diseases, totalling approximately 16.

Mr. President, the resolution I am introducing today would recognize the contributions, sacrifices, and distinguished service of Americans exposed to radiation or radioactive materials in the line of military duty and authorize a day of remembrance for these men and women.

From 1945 to 1963, the U.S. exploded approximately 235 nuclear devices, potentially exposing an estimated 220,000 military personnel to unknown levels of radiation. In addition, roughly 195,000 servicemembers have been identified as participants in the post-WWII occupation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan. Many of these veterans claimed that low levels of radiation released during the testing, or exposure to radiation in service in Hiroshima and Na-

gasaki, may be a cause of certain medical conditions that have developed since that service.

Under my resolution, Sunday July 16, 2000, the 55th anniversary of the first atomic explosion—the Trinity Shot in New Mexico—is designated as a "National Day of Remembrance" honoring veterans exposed to radiation in the line of military duty, and the President is urged to issue a proclamation observing the day and paying tribute to these Americans who have had to fight so hard to get the recognition and benefits they deserve. The measure also expresses the sense of the Senate that the Department of Veterans Affairs should take steps to ensure that veterans exposed to radiation in service to their country are awarded the benefits and services they deserve.

Mr. President, the nation has a solemn responsibility to veterans who are injured, or who incur a disease, while serving in the military, including the provision of health care, cash payments, and other benefits that may be awarded to veterans who experience disabilities resulting from military service. This precedent is well-established and should not be undercut or weakened.

I hope that my colleagues will join me in a strong show of support for this resolution and the men and women exposed to radiation in the line of duty.

Thank you, Mr. President, and I yield the floor.

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating to the resolution be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 336) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 336

Whereas the Nation has a responsibility to veterans who are injured, or who incur a disease, while serving in the Armed Forces, including the provision of health care, cash compensation, and other benefits for such disabilities;

Whereas from 1945 to 1963, the United States conducted test explosions of approximately 235 nuclear devices, potentially exposing approximately 220,000 members of the Armed Forces to unknown levels of radiation, and approximately 195,000 members of the Armed Forces have been identified as participants in the occupation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, after World War II;

Whereas many of these veterans later claimed that low levels of radiation released during such tests, or exposure to radiation during such occupation, may be a cause of certain medical conditions; and

Whereas Sunday, July 16, 2000, is the 55th anniversary of the first nuclear explosion, the Trinity Shot in New Mexico: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that—

(1) July 16, 2000, should be designated as a "National Day of Remembrance" in order to

honor veterans exposed to radiation or radioactive materials during service in the Armed Forces; and

(2) the contributions, sacrifices, and distinguished service on behalf of the United States of the Americans exposed to radiation or radioactive materials while serving in the Armed Forces are worthy of solemn recognition.

PROGRAM

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, I would like to put all Members on notice that just under 40 amendments were filed on the marriage penalty reconciliation bill. Those votes will occur in stacked sequence beginning at 6:15 p.m. on Monday. Therefore, all Senators should prepare for a late night session on Monday with a lot of recorded votes.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, if I could ask my friend to yield, we have 40 amendments filed. I hope the Senator will work on his side as we will on our side. There is some duplication. It may not be necessary to have votes on each amendment. There may be other things that develop during Monday. We may not need all of those votes.

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, I concur with my friend and colleague from Nevada. I think for a lot of these amendments recorded votes are not necessary. A lot of these amendments will fall on procedure because they won't be germane to the reconciliation bill.

I will work with my friend from Nevada energetically to reduce the number of amendments on this side, as I am sure he will on the other side, to see if we can't expedite the matter and finish this reconciliation bill to provide marriage penalty relief for married couples, and hopefully complete it on Monday evening.

Mr. President, as a reminder, stacked votes are scheduled also for 9:45 a.m. on Tuesday with respect to the Interior bill. Therefore, Members should plan to stay in or around the Senate Chamber for those stacked votes on Tuesday morning as well. It is our intention to complete the interior bill on Tuesday and move to other matters.

We are going to have a busy couple of weeks. We had a fruitful week this week. We passed the Defense authorization bill. We almost completed the Interior bill. We completed the repeal of the death tax bill. This has been a good week. We have 2 more weeks prior to the August recess, which are going to be very aggressive. Next week we plan to take up the energy and water appropriations bill and the Agriculture appropriations bill.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, seeing no other Senators desiring to speak, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in adjournment under the previous order following the remarks of Senators WELLSTONE and BRYAN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.